

WATER AND ESA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the need to fix California's broken water system, a broken water system that no longer can provide for the needs of the State of California, designed years ago for a population of 20 million and the agriculture that we had in the sixties. Today we have 41 million people. By the year 2030, it is estimated California will have 50 million people.

The water system we have today cannot sustain a growing State. As solutions are offered, I believe amending the Endangered Species Act to more effectively protect species while minimizing the harm to California communities should be a part of this conversation.

The ESA has an important role in ensuring species protection, but it is clear that there are major challenges with its implementation. In California, one of those challenges is the Act's implementation limits on the ability to move water from north to south when we have an excess of water in the system, as we have had over the last 5 months.

□ 1045

Simply put, California faced 4 record dry years, which was noted throughout the country and throughout the world; and, this year, we had El Nino conditions that gave us average and above average rain and snow in northern California.

Now, I don't believe anybody thought that 1 year of good rainfall would completely dig us out of the devastating circumstances that California farmers, farmworkers, and farm communities have faced; but, last December, I was hopeful because the rain and snow conditions that were occurring, coupled with the weather forecasting, indicated that there was a high likelihood that there would be enough water in the system to help recover—but not end—the devastating drought conditions that the San Joaquin Valley faced as well as other parts of California. However, as a result of what I believe are flawed biological opinions that govern the operations of the water projects that move water from north to south, we failed to pump over 244,000 acre-feet of water that would have been very helpful today in areas that were most impacted by the drought conditions and still are.

Some farmers, this year, are receiving only 5 percent of their total allocation. It is made worse because, over the last 2 years, they received a zero water allocation because of these conditions that I am stating. To put it in perspective, this year, 7 million acre-feet of water flowed through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta system out to the ocean, and only 963,000 acre-feet were pumped for human and agricultural use. Seven million acre-feet went

through the delta out to the ocean, and we pumped less than 1 million acre-feet for human and agricultural use.

This is unconscionable in a State that has been ravaged by drought for the last 4 years. It also was avoidable. There is a host of technical reasons as to why this water flowed into the ocean, but the simple fact is that conservative decisionmaking, enabled by inflexible provisions in the biological opinions that were promulgated under the Endangered Species Act, led to this avoidable outcome.

Therefore, it is time to reform the Endangered Species Act because it needs to be more flexible in order to provide adaptability to changing conditions. It is time to reform the Endangered Species Act because it must effectively recover species, which it doesn't do, and not simply maintain an unsustainable status quo like that in California, especially when you have a drought crisis. Finally, it is time to reform the Endangered Species Act because both people and our environment deserve better.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to update the Endangered Species Act for today's conditions and not for those of the past.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 47 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend John DeSocio, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Elmira, New York, offered the following prayer:

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, and to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's pro-

ceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. DOLD led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND JOHN A. DESOCIO

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, and it is my pleasure and privilege to host the Very Reverend John A. DeSocio, pastor of St. Mary's Church in Elmira, New York, for today's opening prayer over the House of Representatives.

Father DeSocio has committed his life to both his faith and his country, displaying an extraordinary level of service and dedication to others.

The Elmira-Corning native dedicated his early years to service in his community by volunteer firefighting. He went on to complete his undergraduate career at St. John Fisher College in Pittsford, New York. He would later receive his master of divinity and master of arts from Saint Bernard's Seminary in Rochester, New York. Father DeSocio was ultimately ordained as a Roman Catholic priest in 1978. Father was also chaplain for Ithaca College.

Mr. Speaker, in 1992, which I am very proud of, Father DeSocio was commissioned in the U.S. Navy and served 17 years before being honorably discharged in 2009.

Following his military service, Father returned to his hometown and resumed working with groups like Lions International, the Knights of Columbus, and the Southport and Elmira volunteer fire departments.

He is a pillar in our community, Mr. Speaker, and we are tremendously honored to have him with us here today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

VETERANS ACHIEVE JOBS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)